

**MINUTES OF THE  
EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Thursday, September 18, 2008 – 8:00 a.m.

Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah

**Members Present:**

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson, Senate Chair  
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes, House Chair  
Sen. Curtis S. Bramble  
Sen. Lyle W. Hillyard  
Sen. Patricia W. Jones  
Sen. Ross I. Romero  
Rep. Sylvia S. Andersen  
Rep. Brad L. Dee  
Rep. Craig A. Frank  
Rep. Kory M. Holdaway  
Rep. Bradley G. Last  
Rep. Rebecca D. Lockhart  
Rep. Ronda Rudd Menlove  
Rep. Michael T. Morley  
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss

Rep. LaWanna "Lou" Shurtliff  
Rep. Kenneth W. Sumsion  
Rep. Stephen H. Urquhart

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Margaret Dayton, Senate Vice Chair  
Sen. Mark B. Madsen  
Rep. James R. Gowans  
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst  
Mr. Phillip V. Dean, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Allison M. Nicholson, Policy Analyst  
Mr. Dee S Larsen, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Glenda S. Whitney, Legislative Secretary

**Note:** A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Tour of Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind (USDB), Connor Street Facility**

The Education Interim Committee and staff were invited to tour the USDB at two locations. The first USDB facility was in Salt Lake City, located at 2870 Connor Street.

Sen. Stephenson called the meeting to order at 8:20 a.m. Sen. Dayton and Rep. Gowans were excused from attending the meeting.

Superintendent Mark Smith, USDB, welcomed committee members and staff to the USDB and thanked legislators for taking the time to tour the facilities. He gave a brief overview of USDB services.

Dr. Jennifer Howell, Director, Curriculum and Assessment, USDB, distributed and reviewed a pamphlet of information, "USDB 2008-09 Services and Enrollment." She noted that the USDB provides three levels of educational service to students throughout the state who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deafblind. She explained that decisions about which program to attend are based on individual learning needs and preferences of families. The three programs are the following: 1) center-based programs; 2) magnet school programs; and 3) outreach programs.

The Committee broke into two groups and toured the Connor Street facility.

**2. Discussion of USDB Issues and Public Comment**

After the tour, the Committee met in the multipurpose room to discuss USDB issues and to receive public comment.

Mr. Karl Wilson, Utah State Office of Education, distributed a handout, "USDB Legislative Workgroup Recommendations - Draft 9-12-08," and noted the State Board of Education voted to adopt the recommendations of the USDB workgroup.

Ms. Jan Ferre, Utah Coalition for People with Disabilities, stated the proposed recommendations represent a good consensus position.

Ms. Marla Palmer, President, Utah Parents of Blind Children, expressed the need for baseline data, standards, and accountability on the extent to which blind and visually impaired students are literate and independent.

Mr. Ron Gardner, USDB Institutional Council, discussed areas for improvement and expressed concern with the level of literacy of blind students and graduates.

Ms. Leslie Gertsch, workgroup participant, stated the proposal allows a deaf or blind student who is on grade level to stay at USDB. She noted that there needs to be a better connection between school districts and USDB.

Mr. Andrew Riggle, Disability Law Center, distributed and reviewed his written comments, "Education Interim Testimony on the Future of the USDB."

Ms. Shelly Bridgewaters, parent of a blind child, spoke favorably of the services provided by USDB.

Ms. Gwyneth Kenner, USDB Institutional Council member and parent of a hard of hearing student at USDB, spoke in support of USDB and noted that the students deserve a permanent school building.

Ms. Gena Brower, parent of a visually impaired student who attended USDB, spoke in support of USDB.

### **3. Depart for Ogden**

The Committee proceeded to the Ogden USDB facility at 10:05 a.m.

### **4. Tour of USDB, Ogden Facility**

The Committee and staff toured the USDB at 742 Harrison Boulevard in Ogden, Utah at 11:15 a.m.

Superintendent Smith presented a video on the Parent Infant Program that is available at the USDB Ogden facility.

Ms. Pam Cragun, parent, spoke about her son's success in learning sign language at the school and noted how the USDB assists families in the program.

### **5. Other Items / Adjourn**

After the Committee toured the USDB Ogden facility, Sen. Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.